



NEWS RELEASE

August 5, 2009

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EPA FUNDS LONG BEACH BIONEER ACADEMY

**Pacific Gateway Workforce Investment Network Receives \$450,000 in
American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Funds for EPA Job Training Grant**

The Environmental Protection Agency has announced that the Pacific Gateway Workforce Investment Network is a recipient of an American Recovery and Reinvestment Act job-training grant totaling \$452,212 to train low-income residents in skills that can lead to a Green-Jobs Career Pathway ladder.

"This EPA funding adds another layer in the foundation of our local Green Jobs Center, an approach which is preparing and connecting residents to emerging and important industries," said Mayor Foster. "Long Beach has been hit hard by the current economic conditions and this program is one important step in securing meaningful training and employment for our residents."

"Through a collaborative partnership of employers, educational institutions, community-based and civic organizations, the Long Beach Bioneer Academy will provide environmental cleanup, and health and safety training program for 100 low-income, disadvantaged young adult residents of brownfields-impacted communities. We see this as the first of many programs to be sponsored by the Academy," said Workforce Investment Network Executive Director Bryan Rogers.

"The Workforce Investment Board is pleased that its collaborative strategies in sector-based workforce initiatives are improving the lives of area residents and helping to put critical dollars back in our community. The Board is especially pleased that this is the third Green Job grant the Pacific Gateway Workforce Investment Network has been associated with in recent months," said Shaun Lumachi, Workforce Investment Board Chair.

Earlier this year, the Workforce Investment Network and Mayor Foster assisted the Conservation Corps of Long Beach in obtaining a \$550,000 grant from the Wal-Mart Foundation Green Jobs Training Grant Initiative and, in June, the Network was the recipient of the nearly \$1 million American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funded grant for the Governor's Green Job Corps. Through these three projects, hundreds of low-income residents will receive training to develop Green Job skills.

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The Long Beach Bioneer Academy training program, which will consist of four 22-week, 350-hour cycles over two years, will target predominately minority, low-income, unemployed and underemployed individuals, 18-30 years of age, with multiple barriers who reside in brownfields-impacted areas in and around the former Union Pacific Railroad and Metropolitan Transit Authority sites.

“The term ‘bioneer’ melds the words biology and pioneer. It reflects an innovative, multidisciplinary and collaborative approach to resolve local environmental and socio-economic challenges. It is a perfect term for the new Green Economy that we are growing in Long Beach,” said Larry Rich, Sustainability Coordinator for the City of Long Beach.

The training activities are designed to ensure that graduates are prepared with the necessary skills, certifications, and experience to qualify for employment and progress along career pathways in “green collar” jobs on brownfields sites and/or environmental work involving the cleanup and redevelopment of other contaminated sites.

Courses will include OSHA 30-hour health and safety certification, HAZWOPER certification, and asbestos, lead, and mold abatement certification. All training will be conducted by qualified providers and will include 60 hours of on-site experience.

Upon graduation, the Network’s employment specialists and business service team members will connect graduates with the business community and an extensive network of environmental employers to place graduates with appropriate employers.

According to the Environmental Protection Agency’s Fact Sheet, the Recovery Act is an unprecedented effort to jumpstart our economy, and create or save millions of jobs. This law provided stimulus funds to the Brownfields Program to award grants to train unemployed or underemployed individuals to evaluate and clean up former industrial and commercial sites.

EPA’s Brownfields Program empowers states, communities, and other stakeholders to work together to prevent, assess, safely clean up, and sustainably reuse brownfields. A brownfield site is real property, the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant.

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